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# **THROUGH PARISH & PROBATE TO YOUR ENGLISH ANCESTRY**

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OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

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THROUGH PARISH AND PROBATE TO YOUR ENGLISH ANCESTRY

By Joseph L. Druse, Department of Humanities

Michigan State University - East Lansing, Mich.

Ancestrally speaking, the American people descend largely from the English people. In consequence, when it comes to genealogical problems involving transatlantic roots, the greatest area of their concentration is in England. Moreover, most of us whose ancestors have been here three or more generations have at least one such set of English roots. Sooner or later, then, we run up against the emigrant ancestor from England for whom no research has been done, or, if attempted, has as yet proved fruitless.

Now, as the problems involved are surveyed, we note that they resolve themselves into two separate but sequential problems. First: where did our mysterious ancestor, John Smith, come from? Then, secondly: who were his forbears? The second problem is usually a little easier than the first to solve. When we look at the materials available for reaching a solution, again we note a division of the problem. Was he in England before 1840 or after 1840? In some ways, as one would expect, the solution of later problems is much easier than those of earlier date, not alone from the fact that family tradition is stronger, more detailed, but also from the fact that about this time both census and registry records become more centralized and standardized in England itself.

Correlated with these problems are those of Irish, Scottish, and Welsh research. Irish and Scottish research involves special techniques and acquaintance with records peculiar to those areas; moreover, Irish and Welsh records are based on the tales the traditional bards handed down concerning the descents of families, and the degree of reliability and utility of such records is a matter of much dispute today. For these reasons we will not treat of them.

In solving the problem of the transatlantic pioneer, the procedure at the start is the same as for an American problem. First, we must assemble all we know about the man concerned - American evidences; family traditions which suggest his age, places in England where he resided, occupation, religious affiliation; romantic stories, such as eloping with an earl's daughter; estimated or known date of emigration, place of origin of his wife or in-laws, or of the settlers of the community in which he resided; variant spellings of his name;

Christian names both male and female which appear frequently in the family; heirlooms; any or all of this material may prove exceedingly valuable as clues or as corroboration. In many cases your acceptance of an ancestral descent will depend on a very high degree of probability; few of such researches result in so conclusive a piece of evidence as the will of a father specifying his "son Onesiphorus Buckingham, dwelling in Boston, New England."

All of this information should be painstakingly and carefully garnered before setting off overseas, or even before spending time on printed materials which are relevant and which occur in libraries in this country. Since most of us have more opportunity to utilize these than we have time and money to spend gallivanting off to England, it is best to pluck out as much as possible here. Thus, for example, every American record of the community in which the ancestor appears should be ransacked; one never knows when there is court testimony that the ancestor knew a certain person when they both were living in the town of Bishop's Parham, Wiltshire. All wills and deeds involving the ancestor, his wife, and his children should be scrutinized for odd phrases that betray dates, places, and persons connected with the problem. Town meeting minutes, vestry sessions, petitions, educational admissions, all may provide clues.

If the family name of the man whom you are pursuing is a rare one, find where else it appears in the colonies and whether anything is known about the origins of the other holders of the name. If the name is Clark, Smith, or Jones, do not despair. Find other Clarks, Smiths, and Joneses in the community of your problem, and see if anything is known of their origins. It will also be useful to draw up a list of variants in spelling the name; erratic spelling was the rule rather than the exception in earlier eras.

Now you can assemble all your data - label all of it as either evidenced, probable or possible. Indicate for your probabilities and possibilities whether they are strong or faint. These decisions will determine the order in which you pursue the various leads. A caution here - even if you come across a piece of evidenced proof of origin, such as direct testimony of the place of origin, don't stop or discard whatever other material of probability and possibility you may have accrued. Perhaps John Jones was in Bishops Parham at a given time; but the mobility of Englishmen in the late sixteenth and later centuries was such that he may have been there for but a few years, and his real origins are in a far distant place, perhaps indicated by one of your faintest possibilities. One of the most common and plangent cries of American researchers in England is - "Why didn't I check so and so before I came over?" Be sure, rather than sorry.

The second thing you can learn to do before you set forth for England is to school yourself in the script and legal forms of earlier English history. Wills become common in the sixteenth century, and the script of that era is not too difficult, although spelling is a block. But the earlier seventeenth century forms of handwriting become quite varied, and the script of each locality is a separate challenge. If you can learn to read these early scripts, you can save yourself hours and days of painful work over there, painful particularly because you know your time is limited, and every hour is precious. Volume III of the Smith and Gardiner series presents examples and exercises to work. Knowledge of legal forms is useful. You can learn to scan a will, for instance; a glance usually indicates the name and place of the testator; then you can skip the flowery religious dedications of body and soul, and get into the heart of the matter. Similar acquaintanceship with deeds, apprentice forms, and the like, will save you quite a bit of time.

The third thing to do is to familiarize yourself with the English map. It is well worth your while to know where the various English counties are in order to visualize a sort of real atmosphere for your ancestor. You can begin to lay out routes to the places where you have leads. Very often the English ancestor will have moved or married across English county lines. If you are certain of the county concerned, study the names of the villages and parishes in it.

The fourth task for you is to apprise yourself of the methods and techniques of English research. You will want to read and re-read some good reference work on the matter: the set by Smith and Gardner, Genealogical Research in England and Wales (three volumes out of four already issued) provides a wealth of information, recommendations, and clues to research in the ancestral isle. These you can study at home and make better plans for your trip abroad.

The fifth and not the least important thing is to join the Society of Genealogists in London. They issue a quarterly journal which is both interesting and useful; but more than that, the great library in London, the best of its sort in England, has great indexes and manuscript material which you cannot afford to neglect. They also publish a handbook which is just that - a wonderful short guide which you will find of infinite value. There is a daily and half-day fee for non-members.

Sixth, you will examine and check the printed materials available in America, or at least in your locality. There are first of all the great bibliographies - Marshall, and Whitmore, his continu-

ator. These provide an excellent survey of materials, listed by families, down to 1953. Materials appearing since that time must be picked up from the periodical bibliographies. Next there are various printed series which you can scan: the Harleian Society has in many of its volumes the great Visitations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and also other materials such as Musgrave's Obituaries. The Victoria County History Series, still in the process of appearing; the Phillimore Marriage Register series; the great separate county histories written in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many of which are rich in genealogical data; the printed abstracts and lists of the Canterbury Prerogative Court wills; and the three volumes of H. F. Waters, Genealogical Gleanings in England which was the result of years of abstracting London wills which seemed to the author relevant to early American colonists. There are published lists of emigrants from England to America in various years, various types (e.g. Quakers, bound-servants), and from various places, (e.g. Liverpool, Ipswich). Banks and Brownell's Topographical Dictionary, if used carefully, is of value. The great county historical society's series are also available and should be consulted. If you have checked all these things before leaving for England, your knowledge (even if of a negative cast) will make your time abroad much more profitable.

Last, you may wish to consult American libraries before going abroad. It is often very convenient to combine this sort of research with other forms of travel. All the good genealogical collections such as the Burton, Michigan State Library, the New England Society, the New York Society, the Newberry in Chicago, the Library of Congress, have much very worthwhile material available, some in manuscript, some printed. But today probably the richest material in America lies in the great Salt Lake City collection of the Latter Day Saints Church, whose active young people have been abroad for many years microfilming the parish registers and other such materials, as well as many of the library manuscript materials and indexes of the British Isles and the Continent. I cannot tell you under what circumstances research in their collections is available; I hear glowing reports of great numbers of microfilm readers, which are so fully used that they must be booked in advance; reports of attempt to use the new computer systems to some genealogical advantage. I am certain that a great deal of time in England can be more profitably employed after the resources of Salt Lake City have been exploited.

Now you have done what you can in America. Your ticket for England is in your purse, and, behold, you have landed in London. I assume any 100% red-blooded genealogist will fly, if merely to save the ten days or two weeks for more research abroad. You've checked into your hotel (and for the genealogist there are three

areas in London where he may wish to stay - in Bloomsbury, near the British Museum, in the Strand near Somerset House, and out in South Kensington near the Society of Genealogists). At this point your paths may vary according to what is known of the emigrant ancestor.

First, if yours is the worst possible case - you do not know where he comes from at all, have not slightest inkling -, go to the Society of Genealogists and start consulting their great indexes and manuscript collections. Let's take a tour of the premises. The Society is housed in an elaborate late nineteenth century town-house, adjoining the former residence of Sir Arthur Sullivan. On the first floor to your left is the Great Card Index. This indexes references to three million names scattered over five centuries. Almost certainly you will find the name that concerns you - but of course, it may not be the individual you want. In the same room are various other small indexes - Stray Wills, Cornish, North Country, Shropshire, Deeds; while you are there they are worth consulting if pertinent. Also in that room are the great Document collections, some dealing with particular families boxed alphabetically by family name, others dealing with several families, boxed alphabetically by county. Even if they do not provide the exact datum you seek, they may very well point out parishes or places that you will want to investigate.

Across the hall you will find the great Marriage Index which Percival Boyd prepared. This is a typed alphabetical listing by counties for each quarter century of marriage entries in parish registers in England. All that is indicated is the date, the parish, the partner. About 10% of the English marriages taking place before 1837 are thus tabulated. For each quarter century there is also a set (or more) of books devoted to miscellaneous parishes not appearing in the separate volumes. You can understand at once the immense value of this set of indexes.

In the room immediately beneath this is the great London register, also prepared by Percival Boyd. It covers the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. There also is the collection - printed, typed, or manuscript - of various parish registers. These are constantly added to.

In the basement are the shelves containing the family histories, and also most of the periodical series. The ground floor room has the local histories for England, the reference works in genealogy, the genealogical periodicals, the microfilms, and the reader. The hall upstairs has the royal and noble genealogical material, the probate indexes, and works on heraldry. The room to the right has London local history, the American, Scottish, Irish, and Welsh books. I might also add that there is a lovely lounge on

the ground floor where tea is served at four o'clock for a shilling. The library is open from 10 to 5 every day except Sunday, and also on Monday evenings until 7:30.

Let us now consider a second circumstance: suppose you have reason to believe or know that your ancestor came from a certain county. Your first step will be the same as that which we outlined above - a visit to the Society of Genealogists. What you do at the Society will be similar, although you can narrow your sights, so to speak. Moreover, you can now utilize the boxes of materials filed by county, and the local historical publications and the great county histories will be increasingly valuable. Now, moreover, you can spend some time profitably in the Manuscript Room of the British Museum. In the course of centuries the British Museum which contains the largest library in the British Isles has amassed a great number of manuscript pedigrees. These were largely done by amateur genealogists, many of them interested in a rather restricted locality. After their deaths the collected materials tended to be given to or purchased by the British Museum, catalogued in a very general fashion, and are now available for consultation.

It's a rather involved process to get at these things. One must first apply for and obtain a Reader's Permit which admits you to the great dome-covered general reading room. Around a third of the great circular wall are general reference works of great interest to Genealogists - but most of these are available at the Society library as well. The great book catalogue is in the center of the room; you consult it to obtain numbers for books, and then wait to have these delivered to the numbered desk you have pre-empted. In the interim you can pass the time consulting the vast number of reference works on the shelves near you.

The Manuscript Room is in another section of the great rambling building. This requires a special permit; the general catalogues to it are in the General Reading Room, but there are additional more specific catalogues in the Manuscript Room itself. Pens are forbidden in the Manuscript Room - pencil must be used. Every effort is exerted to make things convenient for you.

Because you have the name of the county, a third route is opened up to you. This is the visit to the county record office. Each county has one (or sometimes two) such places in which all available records are gathered together - deeds, wills, census records, court records, anything which is of historical or financial importance. These offices vary in adequacy, efficiency, helpfulness, etc. I have consulted only three of them, so that my remarks will not at all be valid generalizations; and the one with which I am most familiar is, I am given to understand, the

best of the lot, and very good it is indeed. The Essex County Office (perhaps the easiest to visit, an hour by train out of London) is also the one of most interest to the great numbers of Americans of New England Stock, since an enormous list of the Pilgrims, Puritans, and other seventeenth century immigrants came from Essex. Literally scores of Essex placenames dot the New England landscape. The County has very thoughtfully profided handsome new quarters (already a bit tight), has supported an enthusiastic and more than helpful staff, has stored its materials so that they are readily available, and has authorized the printing of a number of very interesting and helpful publications. The archivist, Miss Hilda Grieve, a Scot herself, is a fund of information and a dynamo of help. All the wills proved in the various local courts are assembled together; there is a published index of them (2 volumes) which you can consult before you leave America, and they are produced for you immediately. The staff are gathering together all sorts of family name references, and creating a family file - each family name with its own envelope of these very helpful leads. Anything can be photostated. They have a small but excellent reference library, especially devoted to works on Essex. They have even a copy of an American dissertation on the origins of the Pilgrims, Puritans, etc., who came from East Anglia. As you can gather, I found the experience of working at this office in Chelmsford a most pleasant and rewarding one.

The Norfolk center in Norwich is divided into records in the basement, and a manuscript and reference collection on the second floor. The service in the record room seemed much less enthusiastic and helpful than that at Chelmsford; this may be due to lack of staff, or perhaps, to the latent librarian syndrome - keep all those records in order on their proper shelves. The librarians in the other section were very cordial and helpful; the genealogical section, however is new, and it is more difficult for them to produce specific materials, especially since they have a great deal of manuscript material not yet adequately catalogued. Suffolk has two centers: the one at Ipswich was quite helpful, but their space is cramped; they appear to be just beginning as a service unit.

Now let us suppose that you know exactly where your ancestor came from - perhaps the imaginary Bishop's Parham in Wiltshire that I mentioned earlier. This opens up other avenues to you. You will want to use, of course, the Society, the British Museum, the County Record Office, but you will now go to the local parish and check the entries in the parish register. By royal decree in the middle of the sixteenth century a written record in a book was to be kept for every baptism, marriage, and burial in each parish. Moreover, later rules provided that copies of these records were to be sent periodically to the local bishop for his files. The Parish Registers,

as these books of records are called, vary in periods of time covered, fidelity of entry, types of script employed; great numbers of them have been copied; many of these have been printed. The Society of Genealogists is making a new survey of these records, where they are now kept, (many of them, for instance, are now deposited in County Record Offices for safekeeping) what the state of the Bishops' copies is, etc. Some old registers have, of course, completely vanished. The reports to the bishops, if surviving, supply information to more or less well fill the gaps. Often times the bishops' copies are a good check on spelling, script, etc., of the original entries. Occasionally a so-called Daybook has information supplementary to the entries in the Register. The Registers are in the custody of the local rector or vicar of the parish; there is a fixed table of fees for searching for a name or names, and this provides revenue for the minister. Thus you can carry on some of this work by correspondence. However, there is no satisfaction like the satisfaction of having examined the records yourself, and most clergy are willing to let you look through the records and do the work yourself under his surveillance, as long as you don't tear out pages (this has been done). In such cases of clerical cooperation, you will let your gratification and your conscience be your guide as to the lump sum you choose to give to the incumbent. There are also other records kept, more sporadically - the bann book, marriage allegations, marriage bonds, churchwarden's accounts, accounts of the parish poor; if such records survive and belong in the period in which you are interested, by all means examine them.

Knowing the exact parish from which John Q. Ancestor came is not enough; as I mentioned above, he may have lived there only a few years. It is certainly wise to determine from a map what are the nearest parishes, and try to check their registers as well. More often than not, a man married a woman from another parish - often her eldest child was born at the home of her mother; often a man will die with a daughter who married outside the parish. All of these very common cases explain why a number of parishes should be surveyed.

In addition to the parish records, you do have deanery and archdeaconry records, as well as records of the diocese. Similarly the manorial court records provide information; they are particularly helpful for the period before the church registers began. Often one can trace the descent of a given piece of property from father to son to grandson through the notations of the rentals paid. I suppose I ought to remind you of the obvious other things - tombstones in the churchyard, and monumental inscriptions in the church itself.

If you do have a fairly exact address of an ancestor appearing after 1800, the census returns may be of great help to you. Ever since 1801, with the exception of 1941 when the British were rather preoccupied with mere survival, the census has been taken every ten years. The earlier ones were purely statistical, but those from 1841, 1851, and 1861 are quite detailed. They are in the Public Record Office (along with the Magna Carta) and may be seen if you apply for a reader's ticket. The census arrangement is by parish, and within the parish by street or road, in the order in which the enumerator visited the residences. The 1841 census does not show relationship, but the later two show age, relationship, occupation, and parish of birth. Post office directories are sometimes of use in determining the street on which a given family lives; then it becomes easier to locate the family in the census. Incidentally, the 1851 census is being microfilmed for the LDS library in Salt Lake City.

Since 1837 it has become obligatory to register births, marriages, and deaths with a local registry, which in turn transmits a copy of them to Somerset House in London where they are compiled in volumes of three-month periods in alphabetical order of the surname and given name of the person concerned. There are set fees for a public search in the indexes for a name in a specific set of years, and also a daily fee. When you have found a name in the index which you are certain you want, you can then apply for a certificate (another fee) which will contain the entry in full. The public is not allowed to handle the registry volumes themselves. If your people have lived in a given locality for an extended period of time, it is sometimes easier to use the local registry office, since its volumes are smaller, easier to handle, and have fewer similar names.

Perhaps here we ought to treat a little of that very involved problem of wills. Before you set off on your pilgrimage to perfidious Albion, you will want, nay, you must read Anthony Camp's new book, Wills and Their Whereabouts. Whatever I write here is a summation of his work.

Early in the Middle Ages, wills came to be considered related to religion, and thus to be in the custody of the church and its courts. The medieval church structural development in England is a fantastic one. Instead of the rather straightforward governmental units which form the basis for church organization today, the Church aligned itself with a highly fluid feudal system in which boundaries meant much less than the blood of the Lord. Even today in England, all the resulting confusion has not yet been rationalized, although in the last century wills were "secularized" and are now deposited both locally and in the great central

office in Somerset House in London.

But an area like Essex, for instance, was in the diocese of London and so in the more distant centuries its wills were deposited in London. But gradually the archdeaconry courts began depositing wills. Moreover, by certain monastic exemptions what were called peculiars developed, in which wills were kept in local places or perhaps taken far away to a court which might have control over, say, only one parish in Essex. All in all, fourteen different courts had this testamentary jurisdiction in Essex. You can see the problems which arise; you must know the history of the parish to know where its wills went. This is further complicated by the fact that if the deceased person held property in more than one jurisdiction the will had to be probated in a jurisdiction superior to both the original jurisdictions. Thus, if property were held in Cambridgeshire and Essex, these being in the two dioceses of Ely and London, the will had to be taken to the court of the archbishop of Canterbury, he being the superior of the two bishops of Ely and London. You can see the possibilities mounting. This is why you must go to Mr. Camp's book and figure out the steps to take.

Wills probated since 1858 are found in local registries or in Somerset House. In the former case copies are transmitted to Somerset House so that all wills of the last century can be found there.

So far we have been dealing with the mere identification of the emigrant ancestor. If you already know his point of origin, or after you have discovered whence he sprang, you are immersed in a different and more prolonged quest, that of his forbears. In one sense this is easier than the identification of the migrant, since, once the latter is accomplished, you have a set of English data to pursue, and inevitably the documents useful in identifying the emigrant also contain clues to his ancestors. In another way the quest becomes more difficult; first of all, you are approaching a point in time at which all the registers commence; this means that before 1550 it is impossible to use them. The beginnings of a sizable body of wills only slightly antedates the parish registers, and the natural attrition of time has considerably reduced the quantities of other records. In consequence, it is here that the fact of having an ancestor of noble or royal blood begins to operate as good fortune; obviously more attention was paid to the upper classes than to the lower classes in the middle ages as well as now, and therefore more records involving them survive. Probably there is no one alive of English descent who is not descended from English royalty; but this does not mean that the line of descent can be easily traced. There are many spurious lines, spawned

by wishful thinking, nurtured by supposition, and matured by purely coincidental similarities of name. Serious endeavor goes forward, however, to catalog all the royal descents of the seventeenth century emigrants to America which were really authentic. On the other side of the ocean there have been various attempts to begin at the fountainhead of the blood royal and trace all valid descents to some later date. The so-called Marquid de Ruvigny began the Herculean task of trying to trace out in the early part of this century all the then living descendants of Edward III, who died in 1377. He published five huge volumes, and this only accomplished perhaps tenth of the labor. No one has seriously taken up his work, and he himself made no real effort to pursue such descents into America.

In constructing, therefore, the ancestry of your emigrant, you will make use of the tools we've mentioned before. Published pedigrees of individual families, as well as collective volumes such as Burke's Landed Gentry will be aids, although most such books must be used with caution. Many of them have become infiltrated with gross inaccuracies, pure myths, etc., and they should be used as clues rather than as statements of fact. A little more reliable are the old Herald's Visitations. Several times during the period from 1500 to 1700 the genealogical public officials called the Heralds were sent out to the various English and Welsh counties to transcribe the pedigrees recited to them from memory by the landholders of the area. These in most cases encompassed two or three recent generations, but they often have information of which no other record has survived. They have all the possibility of error that memorized genealogy incurs; but they have also the freshness that eyewitness accounts provide. Most of these visitations have been published, and most of the published ones are available in America in the greater libraries.

The great county histories, filled with their pedigree tables, also come in handy here. The greater number of these historians were honest, intelligent men; they examined records (some of which have since disappeared) and they took down oral testimony; and out of these they constructed their tables. They are later in date than the Visitations, and obviously more reliable for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Most of these volumes are also available in one or the other of the great Michigan libraries. The Landed Gentry and Peerage volumes I mentioned before (there are several different series but those under the name Burke are perhaps the most popular) are the descents, in some cases only in direct line, from the first known ancestor or title holder to the present. Usually all living relatives within three or four degrees of affinity are listed, these being descended in the male line. In other cases there is much detail even about the families of ten

or eleven generations ago. The volumes tend to grow larger; the new edition of the Landed Gentry is coming out in two large volumes rather than in the old single enormous volume. The Peerage is alphabetical by peerage title; the older editions had a cross index to family name, but the newer editions do not. The Landed Gentry is alphabetical by family name. There are no general indexes - these would, of course, be nearly as lengthy as the volumes themselves. If you have a yen for this sort of thing, you can buy the old editions fairly cheaply and peruse them in leisure hours.

To carry your ancestry back into the medieval period, the Public Record Office has a number of sources available. The Inquisitions Post Mortem, a kind of probate record, go back to the early thirteenth century. The Patent and Close Rolls are listings of deeds and land grants. The Lay Subsidy Rolls and Hearth Rolls are tax listings, and the Feet of Fines which go back to 1190 are settlements of cases and conveyances of land. The older volumes of some of these records have been published in the Rolls Series. We have adverted to the Manor Court Rolls; many of these are in the Public Record Office, other in local record offices, some in the British Museum, and some are still in private hands. In them tenants of land had to prove their right; usually this was of inheritance, and genealogical data is adduced as evidence.

There are a number of lesser tools which may or may not fit into your scheme for solving your problem. First of all: the church records of people outside the Established Church of England. In the seventeenth century those who separated themselves from that church on the grounds that it was not reformed enough were called non-conformists, and their descendants founded the Congregational, Presbyterian, Baptist, Quaker, and later the Unitarian and Methodist churches. These denominations kept records of baptisms, marriage, and burials similar to those of the established church, but because their systems of organization were not so rigid, and perhaps because their records had not the force of official evidence as did those of the Establishment, they have survived in smaller volume. Indeed, at various times in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries marriages performed outside the Established Church were not recognized in law, and to insure the legitimacy of their children and their rights of inheritance the non-conformists often had their marriages performed in the Established Church. The same held true of burials, since the Established churchyards were the only legal places for burial. But such non-conformist records as have survived are to be found in various repositories - most at Somerset House, some in denominational hands. Much the same situation obtained for the records of the Recusants (as the Roman Catholics were called); a great number of their records have survived on the continent where, because of persecution, the train-

ing of the clergy had to take place. These surviving records are being reprinted by the Catholic Record Society. If you know that a given English ancestor in the eighteenth century was a Baptist or a Catholic you can check various indexes to discover where the records for these groups are kept.

I mentioned earlier the Bishops' Transcripts (the annual copies of additional entries in the parish registers forwarded to the local bishop). These are located in the diocesan centers; they tend to be fragmentary, but where the local registers have disappeared completely these are very useful. In some cases these have now been deposited in county record offices.

There are thousands of books on individual British families. All of those which were copyright are in the British Museum which like the Library of Congress receives a copy of all such publications. But also as in America a great many are never submitted for copyright, since there is so little danger of anyone making any money in genealogy, and so other libraries may often have volumes than we do; they tend to have more studies of single ancestral lines, and very few of the new popular type in America in which all ancestors, no matter what the family name, are catalogued and described.

There are fewer specifically genealogical journals in Britain than in the United States, and none of them has the venerability of our New England Register. Many, such as the Genealogist and the Ancestor, have risen and fallen in a few years. Others were rather annual volumes issued usually during the lifetime of an elderly editor and ceasing at his death. Today the Genealogists Magazine issued by the Society, Notes and Queries, and a quarterly called Family History are the only ones being issued, and I understand the last of these is in jeopardy. There are a few family journals, more likely to be Scottish than English, and there are the periodicals issued by local historical societies which often have a large genealogical component.

London is a very difficult area in which to have forbears. Since the introduction of census and civil registry, the problem is simplified in nature, although at the same time the factor of quantity is enormously magnified. But in earlier centuries London was full of people who moved in from the country and often moved back again at a later date. They appear fleetingly in a church record or guild account or a deed, and then vanish without explanation. The Guildhall in the City has a library including much original material of interest to the genealogist. So have the various individual guilds. Many of the London church records have been published. The Society of Genealogists has the great Inhabitants of London Index which correlates a vast amount of material,

but the rapid expansion of the city, the absorption of nearby villages, the explosion into the suburbs all complicate work in the field; when you add to this the tendency of London to have a larger proportion of non-conformist (and therefore scattered) records, as well as the great damage of the Great Fire almost 300 years ago, you can see the work before you. I can only recall to you the unquenchable and cheering optimism of Mrs. Esther Loughin's words, "Somewhere there is a record." This is the faith by which we all as genealogists must live.

Up to less than 150 years ago there were only two English universities, Oxford and Cambridge. This centralization makes the pursuit of the educated man such as a minister relatively easy. There is for each university a series of printed volumes of the alumni of each university. Lawyers were not products of the university, but rather of the various "Inns" gathered around the great courts in London and Westminister. The records of their backgrounds and training are to be sought there. There are published volumes on the alumni of the older lower schools as well.

A knowledge of heraldry is a great help. Its operation of course is confined to the upper classes, but once that area of research is reached heraldry may often supply very necessary clues. Often stained glass windows were an armorial portrayal of a family tree. Sculptured shields on tombs often reveal the surname of wife or mother. If you find yourself searching in the families of the gentry, it would be worth your while to learn where examples and varieties of coats of arms can be identified.

Some of you, in lieu of going to England yourself or perhaps as a supplement to going there, will want to employ the services of a researcher there. In the current issues of the Genalogists Magazine you will find advertisements of several such workers. The Society of Genealogists will undertake a limited amount of research for overseas people. While I was in Norwich last spring, I met an interesting young man, formerly an engineer whose university training was in both engineering and history. He is now making a living for himself and his family in the field of family history, and will, of course, undertake commissions. He spoke of himself as a member of an informal chain of genealogists scattered about England who undertake research for one another if the occasion demands a search in a more distant area. In Canterbury there is also the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies which will recommend or at least indicate private genealogists to undertake commissions.

I ought to conclude by giving you a list of manuals which will be of value to you. I have already mentioned Mr. Camp's Wills and

their Whereabouts; he has done a little book called Tracing Your Ancestors which is a short compendium of ways and means (cost: four shillings = 56 cents). He starts with the presupposition that you know nothing except your parents' names. Arthur Willis has published a book Introducing Genealogy which can be helpful. Nancie Burn's book Family Tree is really a very long case study of her work on her own family; it very clearly outlines the problems she had, from gathering material from her relatives to consulting the manorial rolls. She details the pitfalls, the bits of luck, the kinds of thinking by which she was induced to follow this or that procedure. I think you might enjoy its very practical approach. For a general study of English families Sir Anthony Wagner's classic volume English Genealogy is scholarly and yet not difficult reading. The Genealogist's Handbook issued by the Society is a necessary vade mecum for the American researcher in England. Still more detailed than any of these are the three volumes issued by Smith and Gardner to which I referred earlier. The concluding volume when it appears will make of this set a tremendous reference work, in spite of a few errors which have crept in.

What are the probabilities in such research? To follow out the male line, the chances are good to get back to 1600. Beyond that point, unless your family is among the landed gentry or nobility, it's a rare thing to trace them with any certainty. But chances are good that you can pursue your forbears in one or more female descents back to English royalty, and thence by degrees to the ancestors of Charlemagne in the sixth century as well as the Anglo-Saxon chieftans of the same epoch. The Scottish ancestry of Henry II carries you back to the Irish kings of the first centuries after Christ. The ancestry of the Cid gives you a line back into Arabia to Muhammed himself. The forbears of the queen of Henry I of France include a line of Byzantine emperors traceable to the fifth century. These seem the legitimate evidenced limits of western ancestry.

No one will prove his descent from Adam. But collaterally you can probably point out more or less distant kinship with almost every person of note in the English speaking world in the last five centuries. All the joys and pleasures which are the fruit of American research obtain an international dimension in the search overseas - new friends, new visions, new insights past and present; these are the rewards I hold out to you for the use of the tools I've enumerated. Good hunting, and TALLYHO.









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